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ABSTRACT

The study experimentally investigated a self-image development package - Self-Programmed Counseling and Self-Programmed Control (SPC) - that was especially geared to meet the educational and personal needs of the Chicano student. The fall 1973 study used these considerations: (1) how the community college can increase the enrollment of Chicano students to reflect the kindergarten through 12th grade Spanish surnamed population of the district; (2) having recruited more Chicano students, what the institutions can do to retain them; and (3) what types of programs/curricula should be developed to meet the learning styles as well as the personal and academic needs of the Chicano student. The study population included 46 Chicano students who enrolled in the fall 1973 semester at Mt. San Antonio College (Walnut, California) and continued their enrollment through the 15th week of the semester. The results concluded that the SPC attitude change package can help Chicanos and others to compete more effectively. The SPC group achieved higher grade point averages, re-enrollment rates, better study habits and attitudes, and lower fear factors. Results also confirmed the researchers' impression that low self-image is a key factor inhibiting successful academic performance. (KM)

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SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: USING A SELF-IMAGE IMPROVEMENT PACKAGE WITH EMPHASIS ON THE CHICANO STUDENT

by

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INTRODUCTION

Problem

During the last two years, Mr. Raymond Mireles, Director of USTED,[1] a Title III funded project at East Los Angeles City College, has developed a self-image development package especially geared to meet the educational and personal needs of the Chicano student. The same concerns which prompted the formulation of this approach--Self-Programmed Counseling and Self-Programmed Control (SPC)--led us to experiment with the package at Mt. San Antonio College in the fall of 1973. Briefly, these considerations can be summed up as follows:

1. How can the community college increase the enrollment of Chicano students to reflect the Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade (K-12) Spanish surname population of the district?

2. Having recruited more Chicano students, what can the institution do to retain them?

3. What types of programs/curricula should be developed to meet the learning styles as well as the personal and academic needs of the Chicano student?

By now, the validity of the above questions should be commonly recognized by all educators. Unfortunately, they are not--despite the fact that significantly higher "pushout"[2] rates for Chicano students and their lower enrollment percentages in institutions of higher learning are fairly standard information. In a 1970 study it was estimated that in parts of Texas over eighty-nine per cent

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[1] United Students and Teachers for Educational Development

[2] The term "pushout" is used instead of the more familiar term of "dropout" to dramatize the belief that a major reason for the low retention rates of Chicano students is the insensitivity of the educational system, i.e., it does not meet their personal or academic needs. (cf. Mireles, Instructor's Guide, i).

leave school before their junior year. In parts of California the figure is fifty percent.[3]

Closely allied with aforementioned educational statistics are occupational surveys that indicate Chicanos are overrepresented at the low end of the scale and underrepresented at the high end. Another part of this same study also reveals that the disadvantages of the Chicano increases as his educational level increases so that many tend to be overeducated compared to Anglos in similar positions. For example, twenty per cent of nonwhite males who are college graduates employed in the professional category are in secondary and elementary education, a relatively low wage classification. The corresponding figure for Anglos is nine per cent.[4] Evidence compiled in 1973 regarding the small number of Spanish surname teachers in the California educational system is additional testimony that the same type of inequality persists. Finally, the United States Commission on Civil Rights' recently published survy of Anglo teachers' attitudes towards Chicano students indicates that La Raza is still involved in an educational crisis.[5]

The above information points out a twofold problem: societal racism and the failure of the school system to adequately educate Chicanos. But even such direct challenges do not fully illustrate the dilemma; for it is difficult to

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[3] In (5).

[4] In (2).

[5] In (6).

measure the consequences of insensitive teaching and resultant psychological damage. Over a period of years (K-12) barriers of language, time and place compound to negatively affect a student's self-image. These barriers are described by Mireles as links in a chain which must be broken if the counselee is to succeed. In other words, the concerns mentioned in the beginning of this paper--low enrollment percentages and poor retention--boil down to a more fundamental question: How can self-esteem be rebuilt so that an individual will be motivated to enroll in college and to develop the necessary skills for success?

The SPC Approach

The above rationale leads us to the following hypothesis: "The breaking of the chains of low self-esteem, language, time, and place limitations will enable institutions to provide a successful educational experience not only to barrio students, but to all students who enter the open door."[6] While several approaches have been developed to increase motivation by changing self-image, we have experimented only with the East Los Angeles City College package.

Self-Programmed Counseling is based on a series of response steps which help a student develop concentration and visualization by providing immediate feedback. In turn, this feedback enables the student to more readily accept

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[6] In (4).

counsel. Self-Programmed Counseling, then, is the instructor's guidance and Self-Programmed Control is the student's response.

The SPC approach is based upon the established correlations between visualized behavior and the occurrence of the actual behavior. The underlying goal is to change negative behavior to positive behavior. In turn, this will improve the student's self-image. The inference is that an improved self-image will increase the chances of academic and general success.

The concentration-visualization process is the key to SPC. The program is based upon the following working hypothesis:

> Profound thinking (concentration is associated with being knowledgeable; imagination (creating images) implies creativity. A student who develops and refines his faculties of concentration and visualization--and sees reassuring evidence of this--will develop a healthy self-image, and persevere. If he does not refine these abilities or does not know that he possesses them, he may be overwhelmed and drop out due to any number of factors... Since an academic setting compresses a multitude of experiences into our lives through symbols and concepts, it is essential that a student be provided the means to develop his ability to concentrate and visualize rapidly and effectively, at will.[7]

Materials and Procedures

The following materials were used to assist the students in the Mt. San Antonio College experimental class develop concentration and visualization:

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[7] In (4).

1. A cassette recorder/play-back unit.

   The student was taught a retrieval system so that all information on tapes was readily available. He was encouraged to record lectures as well as listen to a series of tapes which corresponded to reading material. The purpose of using the cassette is that it enables the student to study and learn whenever and wherever he wishes. Moreover, it is hoped that by taking the unit into the home the family will also learn and thereby become more supportive of the student.

2. Maltz, Maxwell. Psycho-Cybernetics. New York, 1960, 1973.

   This book, in conjunction with tapes, was intended to aid in the development of positive attitudes. It was the major source of the philosophy of self-image improvement.

3. Funk, Wilfred and Norman Lewis. Thirty Days To A More Powerful Vocabulary. New York, 1942, 1973.

   Wrenn, Gilbert and Robert Larsen. Studying Effectively. Stanford, 1941, 1972.

   (These two books were used to help the student gain actual academic skills necessary to success in college).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses

In order to test the effectiveness of the SPC attitude change packet, a series of hypothesis were structured.

As compared to the control group:

1. The G.P.A. of the experimental group (those given the (SPC) will be significantly higher ($p = .05$).

2. The rate of re-enrollment (Fall to Spring) of the experimental group will be significantly higher ($p = .05$).

3. At the conclusion of the fall semester, study habits of the experimental group as measured by the Brown-Holtzman Survey of Study Habits & Attitudes will be significantly higher ($p = .05$).

4. At the conclusion of the fall semester fear factors of the experimental group as measured by the Willoughby Personality Inventory will be significantly lower ($p = .05$).

5. At the beginning of the spring semester a significantly greater proportion ($p = .05$) of the students in the experimental group will carry a more increased course load as measured by the number of units attempted in the fall and spring semesters.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study included forty-six Chicano/Spanish surnamed students who enrolled in Fall Semester 1973 at Mt. San Antonio College and continued their enrollment through the fifteenth week of the semester. The experimental group of twenty-two students consisted of students who were enrolled in Scholastic & Personal Development 90 (an experimental course). The control group was randomly selected from four other regular courses (English 1A, English 68M, Politics of the Mexican-American 40, and History 1) with a known concentration of Chicano/Spanish surnamed students.

Comparability of the two groups was established by the similarity of School and College Aptitude Test (SCAT) composite scores. The mean score for the experimental group was 281 and 282 for the control group.

Statistical Treatment

The significance of mean differences (small samples) were tested by use of the following statistic:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{(n-1)S_1^2 + (n_2-1)}{n_1 - n_2 - 2}} \cdot S_2^2 \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}}$$

The significance of compared frequencies were tested by the used of the following statistic:

$$X^2 = \frac{N(ad - bc)^2}{(a+b)(c+d)(a+c)(b+d)}$$

Findings

The results of this study confirmed hypothoses 1 through 4. The students in the experimental group significantly achieved: (1) higher G.P.A.'s, (2) higher re-enrollment rate in the spring, (3) higher rated study habits and attitudes, (4) lower fear factor scores.

Hypothesis (5) was not confirmed. The students in the experimental group did not significantly increase the number of units carried at the beginning of the spring over the fall semester as compared with the control group.

The statistics for each of the five hypotheses are presented below:

H_1:

$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	n_1	n_2	S_1	S_2	t
2.72	1.99	21	21	.8312	.7449	3.0016

(t with 40 d.f. is significant at $p < .005$)

H_2:

a	b	c	d	X^2
21	18	1	24	16.7793

(X^2 with 1 d.f. is significant at $p < .005$)

H_3:

$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	n_1	n_2	S_1	S_2	t
214	150	22	24	37.148	53.197	21.0955

(t with 44 d.f. is significant at $p < .005$)

H_4:

$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	n_1	n_2	S_1	S_2	t
18	33	22	24	16.217	10.723	21.8531

(t with 44 d.f. is significant at $p < .005$)

H_5:

a	b	c	d	X^2
11	6	11	18	3.0791

(X^2 with 1 d.f. is not significant at $p < .005$)

CONCLUSION

The results of the study at Mt. San Antonio College led the researchers to conclude that the SPC attitude change package can help Chicanos and other students to compete more effectively. As the findings illustrate, the SPC group achieved higher G.P.A.'s, higher Spring re-enrollment rates, better study habits and attitudes and lower fear factors. Although the experimental group did not significantly boost their unit load in the Spring, there was an increase. However, it is important to note that the average load of the SPC students was 10.4 units. A significant increase would have meant moving from part-time to full-time status, a decision affected by such outside considerations as home, family, and work.

The results also confirmed the researchers' impression that low self-image is a key factor inhibiting successful academic performance. Therefore, it behooves Mt. San Antonio College to continue experimentation with and development of attitude change packets like SPC. It would also be worthwhile for the faculty to incorporate the basic philosophy of SPC into their regular classroom procedures.

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